



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8

1595 Wynkoop Street  
DENVER, CO 80202-1129  
Phone 800-227-8917  
<https://www.epa.gov/region8>

EPA PUBLIC HEARING  
WRITTEN COMMENT CARD

For the Record  
May 10, 2017 in  
Hot Springs, SD.

Name:

Elaine Whittlesy

Email:

eKloss@gwtc.net

Comments:

Enclosed two "letter to the editor" from local individuals opposed to the uranium mining in this area.  
Also - The Unexpected: The future is important. Here is a recent example of a disastrous event, unexpected. The event was caused by old gas wells lost over time in Colorado. The consequences to Colorado is also reported.

# Colorado considers statewide gas-well map after deadly blast

KRISTEN WYATT  
Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado lawmakers are considering the nation's first statewide gas well map requirement in response to a deadly home explosion traced to an inactive line.

The proposal would force energy drillers to provide state regulators the locations of all their gas lines, a national first. A Democratic House committee approved the idea 6-3 Friday.

The measure is inspired by a home explosion that killed two people last month in Firestone, a small town in northern Colorado. The April 17 blast was traced to gas seeping from an old severed underground pipeline, called a flow line.

The well was drilled in 1993. State records show it was shut down all of last year and resumed production in January, although the records do not show the reasons.

"This transparency has never been more urgent. We simply cannot go on this way," said Sophia Guerrero-Murphy of Conservation Colorado, an environmental group that supports the bill.

But the measure faces long odds of becoming law.

First, Colorado oil-and-gas regulators have already ordered safety reviews of the state's 54,000 wells, with



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Workers dismantle the charred remains of a home May 4 at the location where an unrefined petroleum industry gas line leak explosion killed two people inside their home, in Firestone, Colo. Two state lawmakers have proposed a bill to force energy drillers to provide state regulators the locations of all their gas lines.

additional testing over the next two months. And the bill doesn't address old well lines whose owners are out of business.

Colorado has a Democratic House and a Republican Senate, making bipartisan agreement crucial for any measure. That bipartisan agreement seemed elusive Friday, with some Republicans calling the proposal a knee-jerk reaction that won't improve well safety.

"This is about politics. It's not about safety," said Republican Rep. Lori Saine,

who is from Firestone.

The state Legislature has just three working days left — the minimum amount of time that a bill can pass and head to the governor's desk. And Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper, a former geologist, told reporters Wednesday that improved well maps are important but may be better kept by county and local authorities, not state regulators.

"I don't think it's unreasonable to want to know where those lines are. I'm not compelled that it's got

to be the state that controls that," Hickenlooper said.

A representative of the administration testified Friday that the state agency overseeing drilling regulators is neutral on the bill.

Supporters insisted the state shouldn't wait for regulators' safety checks to demand comprehensive mapping.

"People have no way of knowing what's going on, what's near their homes. ... I think that's important," said Democratic Rep. Adrienne Benavidez.

## Marijuana found stashed in shipment of Ford Fusions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NOGALES, Ariz. — A shipment of Ford Fusions traveling by rail from Mexico to Minnesota has been found to have marijuana hidden inside the vehicles.

the other 13.

Each of the first two cars had 40 pounds of marijuana molded into the shape of spare tires and tucked inside plastic wrap, aluminum foil, coffee grounds and garbage

Nogales, Arizona.

Police do not have any suspects, said Steve Linders, a spokesman for the St. Paul, Minnesota, police.

A spokeswoman for Ford said the company is aware of

from Mexico.

Police searched more than 400 other vehicles in the Dilworth rail yard and found 217 pounds of marijuana packaged and sealed to look like spare tires in

# Small gas pipeline blamed for fatal Colorado home explosion

DAN ELLIOTT  
Associated Press

FIRESTONE, Colo. — A home explosion that killed two people was caused by unrefined natural gas that was leaking from a small abandoned pipeline from a nearby well, fire officials said.

The April 17 explosion in Firestone about 30 miles north of Denver happened when the odorless gas in the old line leaked into the soil and made its way into the home's basement, Ted Poczywak, chief of the Frederick-Firestone fire department, said Tuesday.

Investigators do not know how or when the small pipe was cut. The house was within 200 feet of the well, and the pipeline was buried about seven feet underground.

The well was drilled

in 1993 and is owned by Anadarko Petroleum. Investigators are still trying to determine who is responsible for the abandoned line.

Anadarko and Great Western Oil & Gas said last week they would shut down and inspect more than 3,060 similar wells as a precaution during the investigation.

State records show the well near the home that exploded was shut down all of last year and resumed production in January, although the records do not show the reasons. Anadarko has previously declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

The well was last inspected in 2014 and received a "satisfactory" rating.

Mark Martinez and Joseph William Irwin III were killed in the blast and resulting

fire. Erin Martinez, who was married to Mark Martinez, was badly burned. Irwin was her brother.

Anadarko and Great Western's actions prompted nearby Boulder County to ask energy companies to shut down and inspect all vertical wells there, about 300 total. Adams County, which is just south of Firestone, also asked oil and gas companies to inspect vertical wells near occupied buildings, but the county did not call for any wells to be shut down. It wasn't known if any operators complied.

The proximity of subdivisions and wells is a source of contention in Colorado, where fast-growing cities sometimes overlap with lucrative oil and gas fields.

Conflicts have generated lawsuits and attempts to

overhaul state rules. The Legislature killed a proposal this year that would have increased the minimum distance between schools and new oil and gas facilities.

The state Oil and Gas Conservation Commission regulates the distance between new oil and gas wells from existing structures, but local governments set the rules for the distance between new homes and existing wells. In Firestone, the minimum distance is 150 feet.

The commission said last week it tested air samples in the neighborhood but found no evidence of leaking gas. The commission also planned to test the soil for evidence of underground leaks. A commission spokesman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

## Transit

From A1

In September, the city documented 7,691 youth passenger trips, or about 379 trips per day. By April 2017, that figure had risen to 10,522, equal to 585 trips per day.

Rapid Transit System manager Rich Sagen estimated that by the end of the school year his department would provide nearly 90,000 free rides to local students.

"I think it has far exceeded our expectations," he said.

The Rapid Transit System has six fixed routes as well as its door-to-door, dial-a-ride service. Students are picked up along the fixed routes with one destination for the summer program, Sagen said. Rapid City high schools do



A group of high school students waiting for a Rapid Ride bus Tuesday afternoon outside Rapid City State High School.

CHRIS HUBER, JOURNAL STAFF

on summer program-  
"ming," Simons said. "This just gives them a little bit more opportunity to get to  
to continue

Allender echoed that sentiment before widening his sights even further.

"Some kids are stuck in a house where things aren't

there, and we're inviting them to come out and see it this summer."

Contact Samuel Blackstone at

War that began 16 years after Jackson's death. Having, let us fancifully imagine, considered and found unconvincing William Seward's 1858 judgment that the approaching Civil War was "an irrepressible conflict," Trump says:

"People don't realize, you know, the Civil War, if you think about it, why? People don't ask that question, but why was there the Civil War? Why could that one not have been worked out?"

Library shelves groan beneath the weight of books asking questions about that war's origins, so who, one wonders, are these

Korea should reciprocate this worry. Yes, a 70-year-old can be callow if he speaks as sophomorically as Trump did when explaining his solution to Middle Eastern terrorism: "I would bomb the s--- out of them. ... I'd blow up the pipes, I'd blow up the refineries, I'd blow up every single inch, there would be nothing left."

As a candidate, Trump did not know what the nuclear triad is. Asked about it, he said: "We have to be extremely vigilant and extremely careful when it comes to nuclear. Nuclear changes the whole ballgame." Invited to elab-

of this mind, a presidential discretion that is largely immune to restraint by the Madisonian system of institutional checks and balances. So, it is up to the public to quarantine this presidency by insistently communicating to its elected representatives a steady, rational fear of this man whose combination of impulsivity and credulity render him uniquely unfit to take the nation into a military conflict.

George Will is a nationally syndicated columnist. He can be reached by emailing [georgewill@washpost.com](mailto:georgewill@washpost.com).

YOURS

May 4, 2017 Rapid City Journal

## Why in-situ mining needs many permits

**R**ecently, I have heard two themes in the discussion of the potential for uranium mining in the southwestern Black Hills.

One is that some people believe that the mining has already received a go-ahead, which is far from true. The company that wants to mine in Custer and Fall River counties — Azarga/PowerTech — must get at

least ten permits of various types before it can begin mining. And to date, they have exactly one — and that one is tied up in court.

The second theme is that some people, mainly the company, think

that the permitting process is too hard. But the number of permits needed is a result of three things.

First, it's a result of our nation's division into counties, states and a federal government. (Each level of government has different responsibilities under our Constitutional system of government.) Second, it is a result of the fact that uranium is both radioactive and toxic, so we need protection from its impacts. And third, the number of permits is a result of the nature of in-situ uranium mining, which has impacts on water, land and air.

This type of mining involves huge amounts of water — 9,000 gallons per minute — so it needs permits to use water. The proposed project would pump from two groundwater aquifers, the Inyan Kara and the Madison. The mine would tear up the surface of the ground, so it needs a mining permit. And it can pollute the air, so it needs an air quality permit.

Equally important, this type of mine needs to get rid of wastewater. In this case, the company's first choice is to pump wastewater into the Minnelusa aquifer. Note that the Inyan Kara, Madison and Minnelusa aquifers are our three major drinking water sources in the Black Hills, so it's important that some branch of government tracks the things that go into or out of them.

If the company can't get permission to pump its wastes into our groundwater, then it wants to spray them on the ground. This would impact over 1,000 acres.

So, if the company wasn't threatening our air, land and water to do something that is inherently dangerous, there wouldn't be as much need for permits. Radioactivity is, after all, permanent. And there is no alternative to water. I say if you want to use and pollute our natural resources, there should be a process in place that is designed to protect public health, our economy

and our environment.

This is especially urgent when we are dealing with a Canada-based, China-led uranium company whose biggest stockholder (seven of whose leaders are under federal charges for such things as fraud) is based in the Cayman Islands.

It is also especially urgent because the mining industry produces one-third of the nation's total toxic pollution, and taxpayers end up holding the bag when companies go bankrupt — which happens regularly, as the history of the Black Hills shows.

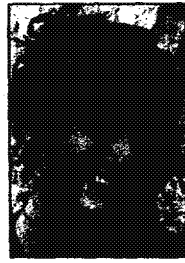
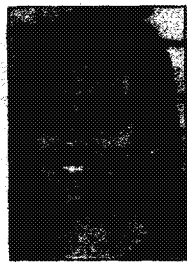
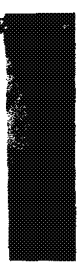
Luckily, in one case, each of us has the opportunity to be part of the permit process — when the Environmental Protection Agency holds public comment hearings on May 8-9 at the Ramkota in Rapid City, May 10 at the Mueller Center in Hot Springs, and May 11 at St. James Church in Edgemont (1 to 8 p.m. each day, with a break from 5 to 6 p.m.). Anyone can have their say.

So if you have an opinion about the proposed uranium mine and waste disposal, bring it to the hearings, or just come to observe. We are, in this case, part of the permit process.

Lilias Jarding is a member of the Rapid City-based Clean Water Alliance.



LILIAS JARDING



in  
en  
look  
d be  
happy  
every-  
went.  
rs, I  
two  
t guy  
d I'm  
hat it  
awk-  
date.  
n and  
ght."

**Julianne Thomsen**  
— "I'll remem-  
ber how great  
my friends  
looked all  
dressed up and  
how much hard  
work the parents  
put in so we  
could have a  
nice prom."

**Logan Block**  
— "I will  
remember it as  
being one of the  
most decorated  
ones I have been  
to so far. It was  
an amazing  
night spent with  
all my closest  
friends."

**Skylar Dekker**  
— "I will think  
about how awe-  
some my date  
was and how I  
couldn't have  
had a better  
group of friends  
to go with."

**Tori Glazier**  
— "I will  
remember how I  
had a blast at  
prom making  
memories with  
my best  
friends."

# YOUR Viewpoint *Custer County Chronicle* April 26, 2017

## Capitol

## It doesn't make sense

fire with the intention of  
pping the gunfire by tak-  
out (killing) the shooter.  
e officer will be able to  
tinguish the bad guy,  
bably because the good  
oter will look like  
palong Cassidy or Gene  
try, or even maybe a bit  
John Wayne type. Or  
l the officer just take out  
h shooters?

The governor in this  
ision made the right  
ice to veto the propos-

This subject reminds me  
the Johnny Cash song:  
n't take your guns to  
n son, (or the Capitol or  
courthouse). Leave your  
s at home, (or at the  
al detector and screen-

screening to prevent  
s in the Capitol or court-  
se would seem to be the  
st solution for all.

John D. Murphy  
Custer

Dear Editor,

Renewable energy is  
now cheaper than coal, oil,  
gas and nuclear power.  
Since October 2012, U.S.  
nuclear plant owners have  
closed about a dozen reac-  
tor units.

The EPA issued draft  
permits to  
Powertech/Azarga for a  
proposed in-situ leach ura-  
nium mine in Custer and  
Fall River Counties that  
proposes to operate for 10  
years. No such mine has  
been successfully cleaned  
up, despite sincere efforts.  
When the mining ends the  
pumps are turned off, and  
the heavy metals such as  
uranium which were loos-  
ened by the mining solution  
continue flowing through  
the aquifer.

Yes, in-situ leach mining

occurs within an aquifer. In  
this case, mining would  
occur in the Inyan Kara  
aquifer via 4,000 wells.  
Waste would be injected  
into the Minnelusa aquifer.  
People are using the water  
in these aquifers!

Do we risk precious  
water for a type of mining  
that historically has deplet-  
ed and contaminated water  
in exchange for a handful of  
jobs to provide fuel to the  
dying nuclear power indus-  
try?

Or do we think beyond  
10 years and reserve our  
water to support the sus-  
tainable economic growth  
that is happening in the  
Black Hills? The econom-  
ics of uranium mining do  
not make sense here.

Gina Parkhurst  
Custer

**Subscribe to the Chronicle!**  
**673-2217**